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18 June 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

No

*USSR: The unusual haste with which several Soviet ambassadors associated with the central committee have returned to Moscow, plus the failure of the top Soviet leaders to appear in public since 12 June, increases the likelihood that a central committee plenum is meeting on matters of more than routine importance. The Soviet leaders are presently facing a number of pressing problems requiring decisions in the fields of satellite affairs, Soviet policy toward the West, and internal economic matters. Any latent disagreements among the leaders could come to the surface with political consequences for Khrushchev or for those elements which are not behind him all the way. The executions in Hungary will increase the sensitivity among Soviet officials in the USSR to the consequences of political error.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

No

*Lebanon: President Chamoun has been authorized by the cabinet to call for Western intervention when and if he feels it necessary. He is still hesitant to dismiss General Shihab, despite the army commander's continued failure to act decisively against the rebels.

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Chamoun shows signs of being under great tension, and he believes that the most critical point in the situation has been reached. There has been no major change in the military situation, but a new rebel military effort in Beirut is expected shortly. The Jordanian prime minister states his government will take any action the Lebanese might request "to preserve Lebanon's independence." He believes that "nothing short of armed intervention will save the situation."

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No
*Cyprus: The postponement of the British policy statement, at the request of the North Atlantic Council, is designed to allow Greece, Turkey, and Britain to agree to further negotiations, possibly to include Greek and Turkish Cypriots, using the British plan as a basis for discussions. At the 16 June meeting of the council, the Greek representative said Athens had not closed the door on further discussions of the proposals, and the Turkish representative expressed Ankara's willingness to join a tripartite conference. Tension continues on Cyprus. EOKA, which was quiet during communal clashes last week, has warned that its forces are "poised for action." Governor Foot, however, believes his force can cope with any situation that arises.

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No
Israel-Jordan: Israeli police activities in the Mt. Scopus area of Jerusalem may provoke a new incident there. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion asserts "there is a limit to what Israel will put up with" in safeguarding its rights on Mt. Scopus.

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DAILY BRIEF

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Israel also intends to protest the recent delivery of military aircraft to Jordan and Iraq. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

ND

Tunisia: The Bourguiba government will probably make a new request to the United States for arms and assistance in training its military forces now that an agreement has apparently been reached with France on the evacuation of French forces and the provisional status of the Bizerte base. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC
No Back-up Material

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Lebanese Situation

President Chamoun has secured permission from the Lebanese cabinet to request foreign intervention at his discretion. The President said that, although he was not necessarily planning to request intervention, the power to do so was essential in light of the precarious situation.

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Chamoun is still unwilling to dismiss army commander General Shihab, despite Shihab's reluctance to take effective action against the rebels. However, Chamoun does have plans to replace certain general staff officers with men on whom he can rely. Their presence would assure Chamoun of effective control if Shihab should resign or be dismissed.

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The military situation remains essentially unchanged, with some fighting in Tripoli. An unsuccessful attack was made on the Iraq Petroleum Company terminal at Tripoli. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] rebel forces are planning to seize a number of tall buildings in the European section of Beirut, particularly near the American University, where they can fire from the rooftops. [REDACTED] the opposition will make a major effort using UAR fedayeen on 18 June. A primary target is to be the presidential palace. Ammunition was being distributed in large quantities in the Moslem quarter on 17 June.

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Lebanese authorities are now telling the press that if the UN does not pledge to guard Lebanon's borders and "do it fast," they will ask the United States and Great Britain for armed forces to do the job. Jordanian Prime Minister Rifai said that his government will take any action requested by Beirut "to preserve Lebanon's independence," but commented that, in his opinion, "nothing short of armed intervention will save the situation." [REDACTED]

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Tunisia Probably Will Renew Request for American Military Aid

The Tunisian Government probably will renew its request to the United States for arms and assistance in training its military forces as soon as it reaches an agreement with France on the evacuation of French forces and a provisional status for Bizerte. Such an agreement was reported to have been signed in Tunis on 17 June.

The Tunisian Government, which resents its almost total dependence on France for its materiel, will react adversely to the slightest implication that France is tacitly conceded by other Western powers the exclusive responsibility for supplying and training the Tunisian Army. Bourguiba and other Tunisian officials were embittered by US and UK refusal to supply the small arms and ammunition he requested on 16 May and seriously question the practicability of pursuing an openly pro-Western course.

Tunisia last week officially asked Iraq for small arms, "no matter what kind or in what quantity," and may have made a similar approach to the United Arab Republic. On two occasions during its prolonged crisis with France, it has borrowed arms from the Algerian rebels based in Tunisia, and Bourguiba is reported to fear that the Algerians might exploit the Tunisian military weakness.

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